When Covid Subsided, Israel Reopened Its Schools. It Didn’t Go Well.

As countries consider back-to-school strategies for the fall, a coronavirus outbreak at a Jerusalem high school offers a cautionary tale.

Medical News & Perspectives
July 9, 2020

School Superintendents Confront COVID-19—“There Are No Good Options for Next Year”

Rita Rubin, MA
JAMA. Published online July 9, 2020. doi:10.1001/jama.2020.12575

Reopening schools in Denmark did not worsen outbreak, data shows

Reopened schools in Europe and Asia have largely avoided coronavirus outbreaks. They have lessons for the U.S.
Objectives

• Review recent literature regarding the role of children in transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and the impact of school reopening on communities

• Discuss implications for the 2020-21 school year
The role of children in transmission of SARS-CoV-2

https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:136712/ATTACHMENT01

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7323934/
Counterpoint: the role of children in transmission of SARS-CoV-2

Contact Tracing during Coronavirus Disease Outbreak, South Korea, 2020

Young Joon Park¹, Young June Choe¹, Ok Park, Shin Young Park, Young-Man Kim, Jieun Kim, Sanghui Kweon, Yeonhee Woo, Jin Gwack, Seong Sun Kim, Jin Lee, Junghee Hyun, Boyeong Ryu, Yoon Suk Jang, Hwami Kim, Seung Hwan Shin, Seonju Yi, Sangeun Lee, Hee Kyong Kim, Hyeyoung Lee, Yeowon Jin, Eunmi Park, Seung Woo Choi, Miyoung Kim, Jeongsuk Song, Si Won Choi, Dongwook Kim, Byoung-Hak Jeon, Hyosoon Yoo, Eun Kyeong Jeong, on behalf of the COVID-19 National Emergency Response Center, Epidemiology and Case Management Team

Author affiliations: Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Cheongju, South Korea

Older Children Spread the Coronavirus Just as Much as Adults, Large Study Finds

The study of nearly 65,000 people in South Korea suggests that school reopenings will trigger more outbreaks.

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/10/20-1315_article
SARS-CoV-2 Transmission and Infection Among Attendees of an Overnight Camp — Georgia, June 2020

Weekly / August 7, 2020 / 69(31);1023–1025

On July 31, 2020, this report was posted online as an MMWR Early Release.

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https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6931e1.htm
• Data generally suggest to date that children aged under 10 are not significant drivers of the COVID-19 pandemic

• Older students in secondary/high schools have the potential for increased spread, especially if strong, consistent mitigation strategies are not in place

• Evidence is not clear on why children (particularly young children) are not linked to spread in the same way as other viral illness
  • Asymptomatic and mild infection are common and may play a role
  • Impact of early school closures may limit the ability for children to be linked as index cases
Evidence of transmission within the school setting

Cluster of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the French Alps, February 2020

Kostas Danis 1, Olivier Epaullard 2 3 4, Thomas Bayat 1, Elodie Baudouy 5, Elisabeth Botelho-Nevers 5 9, Maude Bouscambert 1, Ader 10, Alexandra Mailles 1, Zoubida Boudala 7 11, Emmanuel Forestier 12, Caroline Landelle 13 14, Berthelot 8 9, Raphael Veil 15, Daniel Levy-Bruhl 1, Coignard 1, Christine Saura 5, Investigation Team

Collaborators, Affiliations + expand
PMID: 32277759  PMCID: PMC7184384  DOI: 10.1093/cid/ciaa424.

Free PMC article


Counterpoint: transmission within the school setting

Rapid communication

A large COVID-19 outbreak in a high school 10 days after schools’ reopening, Israel, May 2020

Chen Stein-Zamir¹,², Nitza Abramson¹, Hanna Shoob¹, Erez Libai³, Menachem Bitan⁴, Tanya Cardash⁵, Refael Cayam⁶, Ian Miskin³

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View Citation

https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.29.2001352

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The impact of reopening schools on transmission in the community

Summary of School Re-Opening Models and Implementation Approaches During the COVID 19 Pandemic
July 6, 2020

COVID-19 Literature Report Team:
Brandon L. Guthrie PhD, Diana M. Tordoff MPH, Julianne Meisner BVM&S MS, Lorenzo Tolentino BS, Wenwen Jiang MPH, Sherrilynne Fuller PhD FACMI, Dylan Green MPH, and Diana Louden MLib, Jennifer M. Ross MD MPH

Schools closed in many countries for some period of time during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of mitigation efforts to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2. Currently, a number of countries have fully or partially re-opened schools or are in the process of doing so.

This document is a brief summary of the models and implementation approaches to re-opening schools that focuses on the approaches used in 15 countries for which we were able to identify data. This is not a comprehensive survey of the models used in all countries that have re-opened schools. Our systematic search of the published and pre-print literature yielded very few articles that address this topic and so this summary relies heavily on news articles and “grey literature” sources. It includes news articles, manuscripts published in peer-reviewed journals or on pre-print servers, and other resources identified through July 6, 2020. References that appeared in the daily COVID-19 Literature Report (Lit Rep) are marked with an asterisk*, and the summary is shown in the annotated bibliography below.

Considerations for opening schools

Reopening Primary Schools during the Pandemic

Meira Levinson, D.Phil., Muge Cevik, M.D., and Marc Lipsitch, D.Phil.

For the past 6 months, policymakers and the U.S. public have weighed economic against public health considerations in debating what limits to set on individual and collective behaviors in attempting to control the Covid-19 pandemic. As fall approaches, attention has turned to a third pillar of a pandemic-resilient society: schools. Under ordinary circumstances, about 40 million children would be entering prekindergarten through 8th-grade classrooms this year, including nearly 27 million students in grades pre-K through 8.5. Until these children physically return to school full time, many will lose out on essential educational, social, and developmental benefits; neither the economy nor the health care system will be able to return to full strength given parents’ caretaking responsibilities; and however, we believe that primary schools should be recognized as essential services — and school personnel as essential workers — and that school reopening plans should be developed and financed accordingly. (We also believe that fully reopening schools for middle and high school students should be a national priority, but given the more challenging transmission dynamics at older ages, we confine ourselves here to elementary schools.)

Children miss out on essential academic and social-emotional learning, formative relationships with peers and adults, opportunities for play, and other developmental necessities when they are

Tying it together: Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year

1. Prioritize the safety of students and staff.
2. Prioritize in-person learning, especially for younger learners and those with most need.
3. Recognize differences in potential spread among different ages.
4. Support planning, while permitting flexibility for districts.
5. Take into account disease prevalence at a local level.
Adjusting after school reopening

- Monitoring for cases, patterns of illness
  - Rapid notification & contact tracing
  - Exclusion of close contacts
  - Testing
- The role of county level data
Closing thoughts

• Keen situational awareness is critical.
• Maintain flexibility and readiness to adapt to change.
• Commit to a spirit of partnership.
Thank You!


